



WORTHING BOROUGH  
COUNCIL

Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee  
13 June 2023

Key Decision No

Ward(s) Affected:  
Cabinet Portfolio:

**Strategic Priorities for Worthing Borough Council:  
2022/3 Progress Update Report and New Priorities for 2023/24.**

**Report by the Chief Executive Officer**

**Officer Contact Details**

Richard Tuset,  
Chief Executive's Policy Lead  
richard.tuset@adur-worthing.gov.uk

**Executive Summary**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The vision and overarching ambition for Worthing Borough Council is for Worthing to become the fairest and greenest coastal town in the UK.
- 1.2** At the July 2022 Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee, the Worthing Cabinet, set out a new set of priorities for the Council to achieve its vision, deliver change and further improve the lives of all who live and work in Worthing.
- 1.3** This report describes the work started and the strong progress made in delivering these actions and ambitions for the citizens of Worthing.
- 1.4** The report also sets out Worthing Council Priorities for 2023/24, setting out the Council's long term ambitions as well as the immediate priorities that will show progress towards them.

## **2. Recommendations**

The Joint Sub-Committee is asked to:

- 2.1.** Review and note the progress made by Worthing Borough Council in delivering its ambitions and priorities in 2022/23.
- 2.2.** Review and agree priorities for 2023/24, supporting the ambition of Worthing becoming the fairest and greenest coastal town in the UK.
- 2.3.** Delegate officers to use these priorities to shape and develop plans for 24/25

## **3 Context**

- 3.1 At the July 2022 Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee meeting the Worthing Cabinet agreed a new set of priorities for the Council to achieve its vision to become the fairest, greenest coastal town in the UK; delivering change and further improving the lives of all who live and work in Worthing.

Key priorities included being responsive to the needs of the community by opening up democracy and undertaking a more progressive approach to engagement and participation work. Reflecting the pressing issues of poverty and inflation, the Council made commitments to strengthen support for residents through the cost of living crisis. In addition, work of the Council in responding to the climate emergency and achieving net zero was expanded and accelerated.

- 3.2 In identifying and agreeing these priorities the Cabinet worked with officers to develop the necessary plans and identify resources to support the required delivery. Some of the priorities identified were 'quick wins' able to be delivered within the first year of the new Administration, whilst others are longer term ambitions requiring a delivery period over a number of years. Where plans involve a shared service, the Borough has worked in partnership with Adur District Council as appropriate, through the Partnership Agreement and the associated corporate plan called 'Our Plan'.

Strong progress has been made in the past year despite the significant pressures placed on the Council through inflation and the cost of living emergency. The Council has reviewed progress throughout the year and our updated priorities reflect this learning.

- 3.3 This report also sets out the Council's priorities for 2023/24, building on the work undertaken in 2022/23 as described above. These priorities will deliver strategic outcomes starting in 2023 and will contribute to the longer term strategic Council vision for Worthing, to become the greenest and fairest coastal town in the UK. The Council priorities of particular focus in 2023/24 will be the delivery of social housing and urban greening.

#### **4. Building for the long term**

##### **4.1 A Fair Council**

In prioritising being fair, the Council is seeking to be there for all our residents, helping to prevent vulnerability and increase opportunity and turning things around when residents and families are in need or crisis.

##### **4.2 A Council for the Community**

A number of 'golden threads' run through the approach of the Administration including listening to its communities, business and partners and as described later, community wellbeing and climate regeneration. Through better engagement the Council has commenced an ambitious programme to become a 'Council for the Community', tapping into the enormous capability and enthusiasm seen across the Borough's communities to work with the Council on identifying issues and priorities and being part of the solutions required. These ambitions were set out in the Worthing Joint Strategic Committee paper in February 2023 entitled 'Becoming a Council for the Community: Principles and Approach'. The Council's long term ambitions described in this plan include, where possible, the passing of power and control over what happens within communities, to communities. A separate roadmap will be produced to set out the ambitions and progress against these.

The Council's commitment to stronger and more effective engagement with its communities will be supported through a review of the Council's branding. The purpose of this work will be to support better communication with

residents about council priorities and services, increasing awareness and participation. The council has evolved dramatically in recent years, with a renewed focus on climate awareness and community participation. The existing brand is therefore no longer representative of the whole Borough or of the approachable and innovative council we are seeking to become. Rebranding will help the Council to better embrace and engage the varied communities across our Borough – Town, coast and countryside – and tell the story of transformation we are undergoing.

Our paper 'Council for the Community' articulated our vision and ambition here and we have already made progress towards this over the last year:

- 4.3 **Opening up Decision Making** - In July 2022 the Council established the new Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee enabling the Council to better focus on the issues and interests of the Borough, helping to open up democracy and better share decision making. Three Subcommittee meetings have, as part of this approach, been taken into community settings and this will be developed upon in 2023/24. Work is ongoing to identify how the Council, through a number of different approaches, could better engage local communities in decision making processes.
- 4.4 **Big Listen Campaign** - Starting during the first 100 days of the new Administration, the Council started a town-wide Big Listen Campaign. The campaign aimed to listen to residents, in many different locations, sharing different ideas across every area of Council activity. Through this phase one of the Big Listen the Council developed and agreed a new approach to participation combining new methods and approaches to listening, documenting and capturing the views and opinions of citizens.

The Big Listen approach has been used to shape Council budget setting work for 2023/24 and the priorities and delivery of Council services going forward. A more detailed report on the findings and lessons learnt from the Big Listen Phase 1 will be published in 2023.

- 4.5 **Big Clean-Up** - Alongside the Big Listen Campaign the Council has also undertaken a number of Big Clean-up events focusing on the town centre and seafront. Through this approach the Council has worked with the Worthing Town Centre Initiative, local businesses, residents and community groups, identifying problems and areas that need improvement, and supporting the community in getting them cleaned up. Feedback from residents and businesses in undertaking this work has been used to further inform and direct

regeneration work in these areas. Further details are described later in the report.

We will continue to develop our Council for the Community roadmap as outlined above, with the following commitments for 2023/24:

<b>Council for the Community - Actions and Priorities 2023/2024</b>	
Continue to develop Big Listen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An evaluation report for The Big Listen Phase 1 will be published and</li> <li>• There will be a Big Listen Phase 2 where community members will be trained and supported to help lead and deliver the process.</li> </ul>
Community Directed Spend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of our budget building process for 2024/25 the Administration will identify which funding could be released for community directed spend in local neighbourhoods and communities of interest.</li> <li>• The Council will deliver and evaluate our new approach to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Neighbourhood Fund ensuring decision making processes are improved, more accessible and opened up by involving Ward Councillors and local community groups .</li> </ul>
Work with our minoritised communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Wellbeing, Culture and Leisure Cabinet Members will continue to develop relationships with equality groups, including the LGBTQ community and the borough's ethnic communities.</li> <li>• Additional work has started with particular equality groups and this will be further extended in 2023/24. Engagement work has been undertaken with representatives from the LGBTQ+ community regarding Worthing Pride and work to better understand the impact of the pandemic on minoritised ethnic communities has been undertaken.</li> </ul>
Create space for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As outlined in our Young People strategy, the Council will prioritise opportunities for Young People to be engaged not just in the decisions which directly affect them but also in long term strategic decisions which affect their futures.</li> </ul>

Development of the Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A further review of the Constitution will be planned to support the authority in its efforts to become a Council for the Community.</li> <li>• This will look specifically at how to open up participation in decision making and explore the options for meaningful transfer of power to our community</li> </ul>
Improving Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An access group will be established, enabling community representatives to regularly meet with councillors and officers to identify accessibility problems and agree solutions.</li> </ul>

#### 4.6 The Cost of Living Emergency

A very significant focus of the Council has been to respond quickly and effectively to the cost of living crisis affecting every household in the Borough. During 2022 and into 2023 inflation has been at its highest for many decades and has most visibly been seen in the sharp rise in energy bills and soaring food prices. Whilst many households and businesses have been struggling, the living standards and wellbeing of our most vulnerable residents has required urgent action.

In response to this crisis the Council declared a 'Cost of Living Emergency' at the July 2022 Full Council Meeting and work commenced immediately after this declaration with residents, businesses and partners to create an action plan to address needs. Through this process a strategic partnership has been established and a road map developed with this group and agreed by Worthing Cabinet in September 2022. This Roadmap (with associated action plan and communications plan) reflects the complexity of the challenges faced by our residents, incorporating multiple approaches to providing residents with support, recognising these complexities in a broad range of actions undertaken across the service system and balancing short term emergency needs with longer term outcomes. The cost of living initiatives also support Worthing's sustainability work in relation to the climate crisis, including work to deliver more energy efficient homes and the development of a sustainable food system.

The Road Map delivers around the following priority areas for action:

- Support our food banks as the frontline of community action
- Maximising ways to address fuel poverty
- Keeping people in their homes safely
- Targeting financial support where its most effective

- Create person centred pathways with a focus on prevention
- A whole system approach to support through partnership working
- Funding and resources to support delivery of the support needed.

Actions delivered in the Road Map Work include supporting Food Groups, developing Warm Spaces and prioritising the work of our Local Community Network to address related health inequalities. As part of this work the Council in November 2022 adopted a new corporate debt policy which provides the framework for the identification of residents experiencing financial vulnerability, sensitive and fair debt recovery arrangements, and effective signposting for those in need of further support. Design work has commenced across housing, revenues and benefits and customer services to develop associated detailed implementation plans and process changes.

Work on our Cost of Living roadmap is underpinned by the proactive approach outlined in 4.31.

Additionally, following a consultation exercise, the Council agreed that from April 2023 the £5 minimum Council tax charge would be completely removed. These changes, combined with other improvements including changes to make it easier for residents to claim Council Tax support when they apply for Universal Credit, have delivered meaningful financial support for our low income and most vulnerable residents. Reflecting the strength of this approach, significant investment has been secured from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for the Road Map until 2025.

<b>Cost of Living - Actions and Priorities 2023/2024</b>	
Deliver the Cost of Living Emergency Road Map.	<p>The Cost of Living Emergency Road Map developed in 2022/23 will be further developed with a focus on being proactive: moving from emergency and crisis support to prevention and sustainable development.</p> <p>As part of this approach the Council will explore the possibility of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing links between the Roadmap and our community wellbeing and mental health work.</li> <li>• Working with the County, schools and community groups to support the most disadvantaged children and young people across the town.</li> <li>• Setting up a community day every week in the town hall to support local community groups to open the town hall for regular events for residents including coffee mornings, talks,</li> </ul>

	<p>craft, films and other events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How we might best continue our working with Boom Community Bank on the new No Interest Loans Scheme and other opportunities to improve the financial resilience of our residents.</li> <li>• Setting up a community pantry as part of a co-produced work with local food groups and sustainability groups and as a forerunner to developing a new sustainable food system for Worthing.</li> <li>• The Council will continue to work with BOOM Community Bank to support residents experiencing financial hardship and to promote ethical saving</li> </ul>
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#### 4.7 **Community Wellbeing**

The Council, during this challenging context, has sought to continue improvements to wellbeing and community safety, helping to make Worthing a seaside town to start well, live well, and age well in. The Council has been working to ensure Health and Wellbeing is a golden thread through all activities and as such is properly integrated into policy development and service delivery across the Council.

Good health and wellbeing really matters, to our residents and our communities. It is linked to every aspect of how people live their lives, how local neighbourhoods and places function, the strength of our local economy and how we make use of and protect our natural environment. Reflecting these complexities and interdependencies, health and wellbeing is a shared responsibility between the Council, citizens, communities, businesses and other partners, including the National Health Service. `

In this context, one of the council's key roles is to become the connector/convenor and create the opportunity for high impact collaboration between our communities and these other partners in health and wellbeing. A second area of focus is to further develop the preventative space and accept firstly that there are others in the health arena that can work in the acute space more effectively than us, but that we are well placed to work upstream, working proactively to reduce vulnerability. The third area of work is to really emphasise a practical manifestation of our ambitions, for example in the form of community wellbeing hubs, rooted in communities and able to respond directly to need and build community capacity in places.

Through the Big Listen Campaign, other engagement opportunities and information gained through data sources, we are actively adapting the existing strategy to ensure it is able to progress the above approaches and address



gaps in provision and ensure our services meet the changing needs of our diverse communities. For example, multidisciplinary working has been strengthened between the Council's Social Prescribers, OneStop Employment and Money coaches and other customers facing services, to further improve support for residents in accessing support and advice around mental health, weight management, addiction and social isolation.

We have in addition continued to develop and improve engagement with our communities and through this, improve the collection of data and information about community assets and needs. Findings from the Big Listen Campaign and the Census, have started to give the Council unparalleled insight into our communities, helping to inform and guide our work with all communities.

Moving forward our priority will be to develop a design for community wellbeing hubs which will bring many of these strands of work together in a way which embeds community action and participation in the heart of our work, alongside the shift to proactive services which we outline later in the report.

Additional areas of work include:

- 4.8 **Refugees and Asylum Seekers** - The responsibility for refugees and asylum seekers sits with West Sussex County Council and the Borough has been actively working with the County to ensure Worthing is a welcoming and safe place for those placed in the borough, for example from Ukraine. Support for the Third Sector continues to be prioritised ensuring communities have the resources and structures to facilitate advocacy, community voice, inclusion, engagement and participation as well as focusing on our primary responsibilities with respect to housing.
- 4.9 **Young People** - Through the above work it is apparent that the pandemic and the ongoing impacts of the cost of living crisis have affected young people in many ways, including access to education and training, homelessness, social isolation and wellbeing, including mental health. Throughout 2022/23 the Council has undertaken a collaborative review of support for young people in the borough and a Young People's Strategy is presented at this meeting, seeking to ensure young people in Worthing are supported, encouraged and better able to thrive. As outlined in the paper, we will make sure that children and young people are visible and involved in all aspects of our priorities.
- 4.10 **Community Safety** - The Council has been actively working to ensure successful implementation of the Community Safety Partnership Strategy,

against a backdrop of diminishing resources for local districts and boroughs. A review into the effectiveness of the Strategy and the funding formula for Safer Community Partnerships, is underway and completion of this will be a key action in 2023/24. The Council continues to actively support stronger partnership working between the police, businesses, communities and the Licensing team, seeking to address concerns over the impact of the important night-time economy (discussed in section 4.14) both on health and wellbeing and community safety. The Council is working with partners to review recent issues with youth violence. Using a multidisciplinary safeguarding approach this area of work remains a high priority as we seek to reduce youth crime and support both the families affected and victims.

<b>Community Wellbeing - Actions and Priorities 2023/2024</b>	
Develop the Health and Wellbeing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will publish a Health and Wellbeing principles strategy for Worthing at the end of this year, with regular progress reporting.</li> </ul>
Embed Health and Wellbeing golden thread.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will undertake a cross cutting review of the directorates to better understand how the authority's work is contributing to the health and wellbeing of our Communities.</li> </ul>
Develop a Community Hub approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will develop a broader holistic community hub approach to support better health and wellbeing outcomes. This work will be developed over the summer and next steps published in the Autumn</li> </ul>
Support the Young Person's Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will support the delivery of the Young Person's Strategy, including engagement work, partnership with schools and colleges and a mental health support event.</li> </ul>
Improve Community Safety outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will seek to further increase understanding, awareness and support for community safety and will seek to develop, where possible, a public health approach to reducing offending.</li> <li>• Work with our partners to create safer spaces and address violence against women and girls in the night time economy.</li> <li>• Work aimed at reducing youth offending will be highlighted with regular updates brought to Cabinet and the overall</li> </ul>

	approach integrated in the wider young people's work described above.
Refugees and asylum seekers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council will seek to improve support for refugees and asylum seekers as we work to develop our knowledge and connection with the minorities communities which are here in Worthing.</li> </ul>

#### 4.11 **Housing and Citizen Services**

The Citizen Services Cabinet Portfolio has been established to bring together key service areas linked to housing and entitlements, including homelessness prevention and homeless services provision, revenue and benefits and Council Tax Support, and customer service teams. In bringing these services together, under a single Cabinet Portfolio, the Council is seeking to improve support for residents through better service integration and increased focus on prevention through its work on Proactive; getting upstream of problems before they arise wherever possible. As part of this approach, service delivery with vulnerable residents is person centred, where we work in partnership with our residents to identify options and delivery solutions together.

The Council as part of this work continues to ensure residents have access to suitable housing and is actively developing models that could provide this in a sustainable way, for example by repurposing existing buildings and protecting our limited green spaces. Our entitlements system (including benefits) is subject to ongoing review to ensure it is fair and accessible; ensuring everyone can get the help they need when they need it.

Other areas of progress include:

- 4.12 **Housing** - A landmark housing conference for Worthing was held in February 2023 where key leaders from property development companies, housing associations, architects, charities and consultants from across the region came to explore the best approaches for providing housing, including Council Housing provision, across the borough. Outcomes from the conference include workstreams on how we can develop better 'move on options' for the many households who are currently caught in a bottleneck of emergency and temporary accommodation, ready to move on but with no suitable options available at a rent level that is affordable on local wages and entitlements.

- 4.13 **Revenue and Benefits** - In partnership with Adur, we have accelerated the process of digitisation ensuring the Revenues & Benefits system is more efficient and responsive to the needs of our residents. A new online [change of address form](#) has been launched, reducing call demand in the contact centre and a range of automations are being implemented saving processing time. A suite of improved online forms is due for implementation during the summer 2023.

The Working Age Council Tax Support (CTS) schemes for the Council have been amended so that from April 2023 the majority of citizens who claim Universal Credit will not be required to complete a separate CTS claim form, helping to ensure residents get the right support as quickly as possible. In March 2023 the Revenues & Benefits Service began administering the recently announced Energy Support Schemes and in April, as discussed above, the £5 minimum Council tax charge was completely removed. The Corporate Debt Policy, introducing further proactive and supportive approaches as described above, has been reviewed and adopted.

<b>Citizen Services - Actions and Priorities 2023/20240</b>	
Improve housing provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will continue to work with partners to improve housing provision in the borough, including directly delivering new homes (for example on brownfield sites) to improve the well being of our residents and address the current bottleneck of emergency and temporary accommodation</li> </ul>
Meeting specific housing needs and improving emergency accommodation and support for the homeless.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new housing strategy will be produced this year, building on housing needs data, which will include changes to demand, projected demand and data around the lived experience of people needing housing help and support.</li> <li>• When developing housing the Council will seek to create mixed communities catering for a variety of needs, including but not limited to adaptations for those with disabilities and mobility challenges, care leavers and people who need support to live independently.</li> <li>• Particular focus will be given to the creation of</li> </ul>

	<p>council owned emergency accommodation which will allow us to bring those placed outside the borough, who wish to return, back into Worthing where they can access vital support networks. Having more of our own emergency accommodation will put us in control of the quantity, quality, sustainability, type and location of units as well as helping to ease the budgetary pressures of leasing from third parties. A variety of schemes will be developed with community, registered and private housing providers in 2023/4 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Development of a Community Housing move on scheme with support for single people</li> <li>○ Provision of temporary accommodation provision in the borough with support</li> <li>○ Increasing Opening Doors portfolio for all household sizes</li> <li>○ Developing rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme flats with Southdown Housing</li> <li>○ The Council will undertake further work on the possibility of a Worthing 'Housing First' model to tackle rough sleeping. A grant funded Housing First is being piloted by Turning Tides and Worthing Homes and the council will seek to develop this further as part of our Homelessness Prevention Partnership.</li> <li>○ Recognising that some people who experience homelessness also have experience of trauma and mental health conditions, we will look to provide supported accommodation for those who need it, until such a time that they are ready to thrive fully independently.</li> <li>○ This work will look at a range of innovative solutions with an emphasis on modular and modern methods of construction</li> </ul>
Consider a selective licencing scheme to improve the quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In 2023/24 the Council will investigate the opportunity for a selective licensing scheme to address issues in particular areas of the Borough</li> </ul>

of the town centre housing supply.	that have higher than average levels of private rented accommodation and associated category 1 hazard reports.
Further improve our Revenues and Benefits service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to improve our entitlements (benefits) system to ensure it is fair and accessible; ensuring everyone can get the help they need.</li> </ul>

#### 4.14 Culture and Leisure

The cultural offer in Worthing is rich and diverse and the Council has made good progress in 2022/23 to develop this further, providing the conditions and opportunity for the arts and creative industries to grow, thrive and be accessible to all. The links between wellbeing and leisure are being actively reviewed and developed further and the Council has established a Culture Network, with over 100 individuals and organisations now registered on the network. The Council now hosts 3 or 4 meetings a year, with the main focus on networking, establishing events (such as the Festival) and drawing ideas together.

In March 2023 the Cabinet adopted a set of emergent principles that are currently being tested and agreed with the partners and the community. The principles are intended to act as ‘guardrails’ to support the sector, with the intention of a more comprehensive Cultural Plan being developed through active community participation. The emerging principles are as follows:

- A place where cultural entrepreneurs can set up roots and flourish, where Createch and the culture and creative industries can thrive on innovation - encouraging entrepreneurship and sustainable growth with creativity at the heart
- A place that celebrates its unique creative heritage - through its past, present, and future as part of Worthing’s contemporary cultural renaissance
- Where culture grows sustainably in our place between the countryside and the coast - championing sustainability at the heart of cultural participation and production
- A place that platforms quality culture reaching beyond its borders to the creative coastline - collaborating and championing high quality arts experiences at a local, coastal, regional, and national level

- A place where culture welcomes everyone – platforming full and dynamic cultural experiences of all genres and artforms
- A place where culture and creativity delivers growth and regeneration - enhancing the very places we live, work and study to their best potential.

#### 4.15 Other areas of progress started in 2022/2023 include:

- The Council has started to review the Worthing Theatres and Museums (WTM) offer, clarifying and agreeing outcomes and performance indicators and making these available to the public (where they are not commercially sensitive). This work with WTM has included seeking to improve the cultural offer of the Trust to hard to reach communities. Details of this work will be made available in 2023.
- The Council, with its partners, reviewed Time for Worthing and through this process the 'value' of the brand was acknowledged and further improvements maximised through an increased focus on specific priorities, for example upon the Visitor Economy. As a result of this exercise, the Visitor Information Point has been established at the Coastal Office whilst the Worthing Festival has been created to celebrate the diversity on offer throughout all of the Borough and the updated approach to Time For Worthing has meant it was the place where events have been published alongside the venues own publicity.
- The Council has been working with Experience West Sussex to improve the modern visitor experience in Worthing and as part of this approach is supporting the development of new opportunities, including the exploration of how a new accommodation mix can be provided to encourage overnight stays.
- The Council, through Time for Worthing and associated partnership working, has successfully developed a Festival of Worthing – showcasing music, dance, art, heritage and comedy running from June 10th to 18th in 2023. The Festival will include workshops and family events and take place in venues and open spaces across the town, to celebrate Worthing's wealth of cultural talent.

<b>Culture and Leisure - Actions and Priorities 2023/2024</b>	
Develop new principles for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will further develop and adopt a new set of culture and leisure principles for Worthing. Outcomes</li> </ul>

delivery.	from this work will include ensuring culture and leisure provision are integrated into Community Hubs development work, supporting community cohesion and diversity.
Improve our community assets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of its asset review process to develop a multi year maintenance programme to improve sports and cultural facilities and increase participation (see below) the Council will identify potential new venues for additional leisure facilities, water sports and other activities based on community need. Activities will include reviewing the development plans for Colonnade House and supporting organisations in successfully gaining additional funding from external grant funders, sponsors and other sources of support.</li> </ul>
Improve the experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council will review the town events programme, increasing accessibility, sustainability and local business involvement. As part of this work we will explore additional open-air sites, and support communities to use parks and open spaces for activities and events. Public art provision will be extended, for example by including public art proposals in new developments and public spaces when upgraded and changed. Finally, the Council will develop impact measures for the Worthing Festival to support funding applications and development in future years.</li> </ul>
Work with community and partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council will continue to develop the Arts Forum which will be a significant contributor to a new Cultural Plan for Worthing. In addition, we'll continue to work with partners to provide better signposting to our arts, music and heritage venues.</li> </ul>
Support the visitor economy further.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council will measure the impact of this year's focus for Time for Worthing and continue to promote Worthing as a visitor destination. Work will continue with Experience West Sussex on what is the modern visitor offer for families and the Council will support existing providers to change and meet this demand. As part of this work the Council will review its own accommodation requirements to see if assets and buildings could be used more effectively to support the local visitor.</li> </ul>
Improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a review of South Downs leisure contract and</li> </ul>



contract management.	arrangements to ensure they are delivering best value for the citizens of Worthing. The Council's review of Worthing Theatres and Museums (WTM) offer, clarifying and agreeing outcomes and performance indicators will be published in 2023 and work will be undertaken to develop the contract specification and terms for the next contracting period.
Develop a night time economy plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The council will produce a night time economy plan utilising data, information and feedback from the Big Listen, Scrutiny, local hospitality businesses and other sources.</li> </ul>

#### 4.16 A Green Council: Responding to the Climate Emergency

In March 2023 Worthing Cabinet approved and adopted a new set of principles governing climate emergency actions in Worthing.

The approach seeks to further accelerate organisational work, while building new partnerships and networks with other “anchor institutions”, local businesses and communities in pursuit of ambitious area-wide targets.

Reflecting wide ranging threats to the natural environment, the cabinet agreed to update the Climate Emergency Declaration to include the Ecological Emergency. Following the declaration, the Council recently brought key organisations together in Sussex - South Downs National Park, Sussex Local Nature Partnership, Sussex Wildlife Trust, West Sussex County Council and East Sussex County Council to discuss the establishment of a 30 x 30 target in line with the Global Biodiversity Target set at COP15. This would involve working to protect 30% of land, coast and sea by 2030. Worthing Council aims to continue discussions at the Sussex level, while also exploring local target-setting with local communities and businesses.

An area biodiversity target would sit alongside the Council's net zero 2045 area target, and set the ambition for the whole community to **mobilise urgently for change**.

To drive this work going forward the Worthing Cabinet agreed to establish a Climate and Ecological Emergency Response Group comprising a number of committed and willing individuals from different local environmental

community groups, and other local organisations. The approach is currently being designed to deliver high levels of participation and representation, and the first group session will be held in July 2023, forming part of the Council for the Community approach, supporting different organisations and community groups in working together to adapt to and mitigate the adverse consequences of Climate Change, across decarbonisation, biodiversity, climate adaptation and the circular economy.

In addition, the Council will explore the establishment of a Climate Network for Business, which would allow the development of shared projects and peer support to accelerate transitions across carbon, nature and circular economy - building a movement for change.

The Cabinet agreed as part of this approach to ensure a just transition for all, recognising that those on low income, from deprived neighbourhoods or from excluded groups will need to be represented and may need additional support to access solutions and opportunities.

In addition the following progress has been made:

#### **4.17 District Heat Network**

The Council has reviewed the procurement and business model for the Heat Network delivering the very best sustainability outcomes and retaining as much investment as possible in the Borough.

Pinnacle Power has been identified as the preferred bidder for the Network which will focus on public sector and new developments within the town centre and will deliver carbon savings in excess of 3,000 tonnes a year.

Where Council buildings connect, emissions from heat are predicted to reduce by up to 80%. The approach developed ensures that over time, as the network is expanded, residential and commercial customers will have access to the most economical way of decarbonising heat supply. The bidder's social value delivery plan outlines an initial four, plus a further three full time roles with an emphasis on attracting local people, with provision of significant training; 4 work experience placements per year, two apprentice placements per year, three educational workshops in schools per year, a site visit for all high schools and local universities each year, and paid staff volunteering in the local community including at our nature restoration sites.

#### 4.18 **Reviewing Regeneration Schemes** (see also improvement areas below) -

The Council has pursued an integrated area based approach to regeneration looking at the contribution each new development can make to our places, strengthening communities and minimising impact on the environment.

Renewed efforts to ensure that the new neighbourhoods created exemplify the best sustainable building and design solutions to support our changing climate by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and pursuing a zero carbon future. A concerted effort has been made to reevaluate scheme designs to ensure that they implement biodiversity enrichment by planting trees to establish green corridors that connect with the town, aiding water absorption and air quality improvement.

#### 4.19 **Carbon Reduction Review**

The Council is continuing its work on the Carbon Neutral Plan, including securing £3.1 of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to date to improve the energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions across the corporate estate.

As part of the Council's forward planning work, heat decarbonisation plans have been developed for all corporately maintained gas-boilers (including leisure centres and community centres) and work is ongoing to evaluate options for reducing emissions for the crematorium. A fleet decarbonisation strategy is under development for adoption later this year.

In order to offset residual emissions from electricity, a scoping exercise for a solar farm is currently being explored and funding will be sought for a first-stage feasibility study in the next few months. Further work is planned to improve energy efficiency standards in rental properties, including for Turning Tides and 'Open Doors' properties .

Further bids to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme will be submitted subject to deliverability of the works within eligibility criteria and deadlines.

#### 4.20 **Natural Areas**

Through the new Climate & Ecological Emergency Response Group, and through working with key partners including Sussex Local Nature Partnership, Sussex Wildlife Trust and Weald to Waves (Knepp Estate), the Council aims

to create a local nature recovery strategy that shows communities and businesses what we need to do collectively to recover biodiversity in our town: the wildlife corridors we need to build, urban greening plans and how newly identified land parcels and spaces and residential gardens can be used and adapted to help nature thrive again.

We envisage the development of significant proposals to philanthropic funders, working with communities and businesses, and we are forging links with other major anchor institutions to establish shared commitment to supporting and driving the work.

In addition the following progress has been made:

The Council, through the Environment and Climate Emergency portfolio leads, have worked closely with the South Downs National Park to discuss climate and ecological emergency impacts, mitigation and adaptation to ensure the future of Cissbury, Shepherds Mead land and the Sanctuary land in Salvington ward. In partnership with the National Park, the National Trust and local communities (including Findon Valley Residents Association), the Cissbury Fields Site Management Plan is being developed and is being very positively received by local residents and partners.

The Council has worked with national charity Trees for Cities to establish a new crowdfunding scheme called Trees for Streets to increase urban tree planting in Worthing.. In addition the Council has stopped using harmful pesticides in parks and open spaces.

#### 4.21 Sustainable Travel -

Work to improve sustainable travel across the Borough is ongoing, including partnership work with the county on the Growth Deal, bus network development, refreshing the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), supporting safe school street improvements and planning for a 20 mph community consultation exercise for neighbourhood streets to improve safety. In addition, the Council has delivered on its commitments to deliver an expanded bike share scheme with new hubs coming on stream this month. Further commitments and details of these plans are provided below.

Climate Emergency - Actions and Priorities 2023/2024	
Deliver climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Council will work to implement the recently adopted</li></ul>

emergency principles.	<p>‘Principles Governing Climate Emergency Action for Worthing’ and undertake the work necessary to achieve our net carbon zero target by 2030 for council operations and by 2045 for all of Worthing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will set up the Climate Emergency &amp; Ecological Emergency Response Group with communities, and explore a Climate Network for Business to help bring together and mobilise business involvement in the work with the intention of creating an eco-charter to highlight businesses and organisations making positive changes in the face of the climate emergency in order to celebrate and inspire others.</li> </ul>
Improve sustainability standards for regeneration projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will continue to support the improvement of regeneration schemes and ensure their alignment with climate and ecological emergency priorities.</li> <li>• The council will seek to achieve the highest sustainability and architectural standards in buildings - simultaneously sympathetic to Worthing and innovative in design. As Part of this work the council will review options and consider the development of a design code and/ or develop a stand alone policy.</li> </ul>
Improve climate change and carbon reduction planning across the estate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will identify where energy efficiency measures are required in its estate and where possible Decarbonisation of the Public Sector funds will be applied for.</li> <li>• The Council will continue to re-evaluate council owned and jointly owned buildings, green spaces and other council assets (including vehicles) to ensure climate change and carbon reduction plans are in place or will be put in place by the timetables agreed.</li> <li>• We will as part of this start to undertake an energy efficiency assessment of emergency and temporary council owned accommodation (all council owned temporary accommodation is EPC rated C). The Council will also work with housing partners to better collaborate and deliver an energy efficiency assessment of their properties. In a similar way the Council will seek to work in</li> </ul>

	<p>partnership with the owners of 'Open Doors' properties and the owner/occupiers of properties with energy efficiency ratings E or below.</p>
<p>Improve partnership working on Climate Emergency impacts, mitigation and adaptation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will work strategically with Sussex partners on the development of a biodiversity target (e.g. 30 x 30) that helps engage and mobilise communities and businesses in a shared and urgent effort, developing significant funding proposals for a high impact engagement and community action campaign.</li> <li>• The Council will continue to work with external partners (South Downs National Park, the National Trust, communities and other stakeholders) to realise the ambitions identified with communities regarding Climate Emergency impacts, mitigation and adaptation of Shepherds Mead and the Sanctuary land at Cissbury. The Project Delivery Team will coordinate and progress plans, including application for Countryside Stewardship Scheme (August 2023), further stakeholder and community engagement and ongoing management of the site.</li> <li>• The Council will develop an incident management / response plan to enable the timely engagement with residents and external partners including Environment Agency/Southern Water/others to mitigate for climate change related severe weather (heat, flood, invasive species) and also industrial/biological contamination or disease epidemics.</li> </ul>
<p>Develop a Local Nature Recovery Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will also work with the County, Sussex Local Nature Partnership, Sussex Wildlife Trust and other key stakeholders to support the development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</li> <li>• The Council will continue to develop collaboratively a natural capital approach, including readiness for Biodiversity Net Gain national rollout in November 2023.</li> </ul>
<p>Develop a Growth Deal to improve</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will actively work with the County on the development of a Growth Deal that stimulates and supports active and sustainable travel. In addition the</li> </ul>

sustainable and active travel.	<p>council will seek to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Support bus network development including the development of an Active Travel Hub (Teville Gate)</li> <li>○ Explore the possibility of Electric Bus provision</li> <li>○ Expand on 2023 Christmas Bus promotion</li> <li>○ Fund a design plan for the George V to Sea Lane Cycle path and look to allocate funding for the build as soon as possible</li> <li>○ Commence 20mph community engagement work to improve community safety on residential streets.</li> </ul>
Further integrate climate emergency and public health work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● As part of this work the Council will bring together Climate Emergency and Public Health work, tackling air pollution and mental wellbeing through urban greening and sustainable transport networks.</li> </ul>
Develop local sustainable energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● As part of the development of strategic initiatives to drive to net zero for the area by 2045, develop a broader clean energy approach with partners and communities, examining external funding and investment opportunities to maximise the use of solar, wind, hydrogen and other clean technologies.</li> </ul>
Create a circular economy model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Through the new Climate Emergency &amp; Ecological Response Group, develop a circular economy approach for Worthing based on the principles of Re-use, Recover, Remanufacture, Refurbish, Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Recycle, Repurpose, Repair - across council procurement and operations, the wider business network, communities and neighbourhoods and homes. Many of these initiatives will require the development of propositions and the securing of external funding.</li> </ul>

## 4.22 Environment

The Council's ambitions going forward are to build on the foundations already established in the first 12 months of administration. It will expand to encompass wider goals delivering environmental excellence both onshore and offshore ensuring Worthing is a green, fair and local coastal town.

A Greening Plan will help deliver a network of connected green spaces as a major part of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, reflected in a new Parks

and Open Spaces Management Strategy (incorporating Big Listen Campaign feedback).

As a coastal town, we have a responsibility for and an opportunity to protect and improve our blue habitats - our precious chalk streams, coastline and sea. The Sussex Bay initiative, created and led by the Council in partnership with Adur Council, continues to build strong momentum, increasingly recognised nationally as an exemplar. Stretching along the entire Sussex coast, the project is working to unlock £4m of funding to support kelp and other habitat research, development of nature financing models, innovation in marine regulation through a UK first support partnership with The Crown Estate, support for small boat fishing communities and a range of community participation initiatives including citizen science.

The Council has developed a strong reputation for its work on nature recovery, and the opportunity to more deeply engage and involve residents and businesses is the next big step.

The administration's first year has already delivered tangible change:

#### **4.23 Parks and Open Spaces:**

The Greening guide and Parks and Open Spaces Management Strategy will drive the continued improvement of our council-owned spaces, ensuring high amenity and well-being value for our communities alongside work to improve biodiversity.

We aim to make better and fairer use of the Council's capital and revenue expenditure in green spaces, recovering biodiversity and improving access and recreation.

Our capital programme focuses on delivering improved playgrounds in our parks with an emphasis on accessibility and inclusion; and we are actively promoting the involvement of Friends across our open spaces in helping to design and curate improvements including new planting schemes.

Trees for Streets is a community crowdfunding initiative that has generated a great amount of interest and the first trees will be planted later this year.

Officers are also undertaking work to further improve the work of our Bereavement Services and a Cemeteries Management Plan is being developed for 2023/24.



#### 4.24 **Waste and Recycling**

Work to develop a new Waste Management Strategy, incorporating Big Listen Campaign feedback on options around recycling provision, food waste collection and smart collection services awaits critical guidance on proposed changes to refuse and recycling as set out in the Environment Act 2021.

In preparation for the changes we have commissioned (with Adur) a feasibility study, delivered by Eunomia Research and funded by WRAP, on food waste collection options. The study identifies different collection options and models their costs and performance. Council wide roll out and time-scales will be subject to government new burdens and capital funding, and joint working with the County Council as the disposal authority.

In the meantime proposals for a trial, which will focus on food waste minimisation as well as collection, is being scoped in detail. Subject to funding and availability of resources (vehicles and containers) will be rolled out later this year.

The Council has introduced kerbside recycling of electrical waste - currently collecting 1 tonne per week - and will look to expand this.

In the past 12 months the Council has significantly increased its communication around waste and recycling, including information on social media to incorporate national and local recycling campaigns and numerous blogs covering seasonal items including food waste minimisation and Christmas recycling.

We have secured grant funding for 'recycling on the go' which will be used to install additional on street recycling bins on the seafront. A communications campaign is being launched as part of the project and analysis of contents of the bins will be undertaken to assess how effective they are.

<b>Environment - Actions and Priorities 2023/2024</b>	
Further develop Big Cleanup initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The success of the Big Clean Up will be built upon and as we develop we will work with volunteers</li></ul>

	<p>and partners in order to work together effectively to participate and bring to life our civic pride in Worthing.</p>
<p>Improve community participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of our work to become a Council for the Community the Council will develop a Volunteer Charter, to ensure effectiveness, safety and equality while supporting voluntary and participatory activities</li> <li>• We will develop with partners the idea of a Worthing 'big nature watch' with the intention of using citizen science approach to benchmark our nature</li> <li>• We will support communities to engage proactively with the parks and natural spaces in this journey. We will enable residents to establish and maintain pockets of biodiversity - from the humble roadside verge to tree lined streets, working with WSCC to extend Community Road Verge Schemes and cease the use of weedkiller being used by WSCC at the base of trees in Worthing.</li> <li>• The Council will be an active supporter of NoMowMay 2024, encouraging residents as well as participating in targeted spaces of our own green spaces.</li> <li>• Through continued listening includes working smarter to meet residents expectations for a clean, functional town. Our priorities reflect this listening and are captured as the three Bs; Bins, Benches and Basics.</li> </ul>
<p>Improve communication with residents regarding waste and recycling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated, regular communication will seek to inform and encourage less waste and more recycling - increasing the percentage that is reused or composted. We will go further and develop reuse hubs increasing the amount of material saved from landfill. We will increase</li> </ul>

	<p>awareness about the environmental and health hazards associated with dog fouling.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has launched an app in the spring of 2023 that will enable us to proactively engage with residents about waste and recycling, provide information about what can be recycled, push out campaigns and provide service information, e.g. relating to collection days.</li> </ul>
Improving accessibility of our spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The public conveniences in High Street MSCP will be refurbished and include the installation of a Changing Places facility. As part of the ongoing review of toilets planning for 24/25 will look to develop proposals for the next major refurbishment.</li> <li>• The cafe in Brooklands Park will also have new public toilets, including a Changing Places facility.</li> <li>• We will review the accessibility of our parks in order to increase accessibility for all of the many groups of people who should be able to enjoy our green spaces. As part of this work we will explore provision with young people so they can enjoy these spaces as valued members of our society.</li> </ul>
Develop a new waste strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new Waste Strategy for the Council relies significantly on policy and guidance emerging from the National Strategy in relation to consistency in collection (including food waste), extended producer responsibility (EPR) and a national Deposit Return Scheme (DRS). Details on the policy and guidance associated with the national strategy (including funding for local authorities) have been repeatedly delayed but are now expected 'imminently'. A report will be brought to Cabinet setting out a plan for the revision of the Council's Waste Management Strategy during 2023/24, subject to confirmation of national policy and guidance.</li> <li>• Despite ongoing delays at national level the</li> </ul>

	<p>council will continue to make every effort to keep pace with the Government goal to recycle 65% by 2035 and as part of this will seek to undertake a bins review including for flats, public recycling and dog waste to ensure the “right bins in the right places”, and including tests of the use of QR code public bin reporting.</p> <p>Additional activities planned for 2023/24 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Delivery of a small scale food waste collection trial, building on the feasibility study completed last year.</li> <li>○ Develop our work with communities to maximise the opportunity for community and home composting as part of our approach to managing food waste.</li> <li>○ Continued engagement with neighbouring districts and boroughs and with West Sussex County Council as the waste disposal authority planning for the anticipated changes. As part of this work, engagement will also be undertaken with national organisations including LARAC (Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee) and the Chartered Institute for Waste Management.</li> <li>○ Work with local schools and communities to identify and work with recycling champions.</li> </ul>
Improve the quality and provision of green spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In partnership with Adur, the Council will seek to prepare a Parks and Open Green Spaces Management Strategy (incorporating Big Listen Campaign feedback and to look at both green and blue spaces) that meets the needs of our residents, our Climate and Ecological Emergency priorities and our Community health and wellbeing needs.</li> <li>● The Council will seek to work with CIL and other</li> </ul>

	<p>funding to enable Communities to deliver urban greening and actively contribute to ecological enhancement directly wherever possible. This work will include the enhancement, creation and maintenance of green corridors and extending areas of foreshore vegetated shingle to enable migratory pollinating species to connect with inland habitats.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tree planting, and in particular the trees for streets initiative, will continue and the council will work with Highways and other partners to increase street tree replanting. As part of this work the Council will seek to improve data on trees and in particular our tree canopy cover as we work to increase our ratio of green space per person.</li> <li>• Feedback from the Big Listen Campaign has been used to review and improve the quality and accessibility of the leisure offer in Worthing parks, seafront and foreshore, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Beach wheelchair and place to store and booking system.</li> <li>○ Basketball courts improvement in West Park, and plans in progress for other parks.</li> <li>○ New seating involving young people is being designed.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Improve our blue spaces and deliver Sussex Bay.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worthing Borough Council will continue to work with partners to strongly challenge Southern Water to eliminate sewage dumping in our rivers, streams and sea.</li> <li>• The Council with assistance from citizen volunteers will gather data and resubmit applications to DEFRA for two additional Bathing Designations. One at East Beach and one at Goring Gap</li> <li>• Our Sussex Bay initiative will continue to grow</li> </ul>

	<p>and develop, providing major opportunities for nature restoration, community participation, the renewal of coastal industries and ecotourism. External bids for Sussex Bay are being developed with partners currently, valued at £4m.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A further major bid with partners, led by West Sussex County Council and including University of Brighton, University of Sussex and Shoreham Port has been submitted for a “Connected Buoy” network which would provide mobile signal out in Sussex Bay to support technology innovation in marine research and maritime uses.</li> <li>• The Council is a member of the Arun to Adur Farm Cluster, and is on the steering group for the Weald to Waves initiative led by the Knepp Estate. We will work in partnership with the Ouse &amp; Adur Rivers Trust to develop projects to protect our streams from pollution (litter, chemicals and sewage), including Teville Stream which feeds into Brooklands Lake and Ferring Rife.</li> </ul>
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## **A Local Council**

### **4.25 A local economy that works for our community**

Worthing Council believes in an inclusive, resilient economy which provides stability, high quality opportunities for all and a social safety net at its core. People should have access to good quality work which offers a living wage, decent conditions and good working practices. This means championing ‘Good Work’, the ability for people to access the right work for them, that provides the right work life balance and a good income, with the opportunity to learn and develop and live a good and healthy life. The Council also believes that access to safe, secure and sustainable housing, delivered by a local and green supply chain, is critical for all our residents. The Council is therefore investing in sustainable housing growth to help create a fair deal for citizens now and into the future.

In December 2022 the Administration agreed new economic principles for

Worthing reflecting the vision of the Council to be fair, green and local. The foundation to this economic approach adopted is community wealth building. This is a people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people. The approach seeks to be green and address the climate and ecological emergency in a number of ways, for example the Council is working with business partnerships and networks, seeking to provide effective tools to enable businesses to better understand their carbon footprint and take action to drive to net zero, supporting our ambition for Worthing to be net zero by 2045.

In adopting this approach the Council in 2022/23 has prioritised listening to our residents in order to meet their aspirations for regeneration in a way that protects the environment, mitigates climate impact, provides homes and responds to the cost of living crisis. Existing and future developments have and continue to be carefully reviewed, to ensure developments enhance the environment, reflect the creativity and heritage of Worthing, as well as providing the housing and amenities that our town requires. The Council as part of this approach has been working with local businesses, colleges, schools and employers enabling them to flourish, providing the jobs and training opportunities that our residents, including our young people, need.

The Council, as part of the community wealth building approach, is seeking to maximise the opportunities provided to us through our procurement approaches giving additional emphasis to better outcomes for residents, investments in local supply chains and enhanced local employment opportunities.

The Council has been using its resources in a wide number of ways, responding to community needs and interests on a number of scales. This work has been across the portfolios and includes the following examples:

- Ongoing work to identify how vacant buildings could be offered to charities on a short-term basis and identify pop up spaces for crafts and artists.
- Work to ensure the Decoy Farm development supports the growth of green businesses.
- The development of a better partnership with BOOM Community Bank helping to ensure residents experiencing financial hardship are able to get the help they need.
- Exploring the possibility of developing a local Climate Bonds scheme

- Developing a Worthing Good Business Charter (in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce who have already signed up to the Charter).

The Council's anchor tenancy of the Cityfibre gigabit network has unlocked £25m of commercial investment delivering 155 km of fibre build in Worthing to 37,000 homes with a target of 70,000 and creating 130 regional jobs. Citizen WiFi is now being procured for the town centre utilising the new fibre to council assets, for delivery this financial year.

In the past 12 months the council has delivered the following regenerative developments and initiatives:

#### **4.26 Regeneration of our Town Centre and Seafront**

Over the summer 2022 the Council started its work on the Town Centre and Seafront with the very successful 'Big Clean-up Week' and other following Big Clean Up events. These events involved the Council working with residents, business and the TCI to bring neglected and forgotten areas back to life. The first Big Clean up Week ran from 1 to 7 August and included works to various areas to smarten up the seafront. The area around the Pavilion Theatre was jet washed and the doors and railings were painted as well as carrying out weed removal. The seafront shelters at the Marine Gardens and George V Avenue were redecorated and the paintwork at two other shelters, Thorn Road and The Lido were improved. On 7 August a community beach clean took place with over 100 people taking part. Volunteers also cleaned up and repainted benches in Beach House Park. The second week of activity took place from 19th to 15th September and included work to cut back the Tamarisk hedges along the Promenade and painting works to the Denton Gardens Kiosk and the Denton Gardens seafront shelter. Community volunteering events took place on Sunday 23 October with a beach clean and a neighbourhood clean in Victoria Park.

The Council has worked with key community stakeholders to put together a green, community focused design for Montague Place, with the objective of breathing life back into the heart of our town. In collaboration with stakeholders, the Council has also started plans to implement an additional bespoke set of public realm, property related, climate action and other improvements for this area.



Looking forward we will put our coastal heritage at the heart of our regeneration of the seafront and we will focus on improvements through regeneration of our Seafront and Promenade offers with projects that support our vision as part of Sussex Bay, greenest, fairest coastal town. This means continuing to develop plans to restore the Lido as a jewel in the crown for the Borough and our goal this year is to bring forward practical next steps in an options paper for this vital landmark.

The Council will in the next 12 months explore the creation of a car-free town centre and seafront, with a new network of pedestrian and cycling routes providing safe and easy access. This will underpin the development of an infrastructure plan which will form the basis of our partnership work with WSCC and other infrastructure providers.

The Council will also continue to drive progress with the development of Teville Gate as well as progressing the development of Union Place with the ambition of ensuring Union Place has commenced development in Summer 2024. A key focus of work will be in securing a development partner for Teville Gate by Winter 2023 which will have the experience and capability to be on site in 2025.

We continue to work on plans to support Colonnade House - putting it at the heart of the creative economy of Worthing.

#### **4.27 Green Inward Investment**

The Council has renewed and reinvigorated its commitments to actively working with local businesses and has been working with the TCI and others to support start ups and encourage more networking and collaboration between businesses, communities, the Council and Not For Profits.

As part of this work the Council continues to stimulate green businesses promoting low carbon economies and developing Sussex Bay as the powerful delivery framework for sustainable tourism, aquaculture and fisheries, renewable energy and nature conservation. We are as part of this work actively reviewing the opportunities for Decoy Farm to make a significant contribution to our Net Zero economic ambitions and support green business growth. We will build on this by exploring how best to create and support regeneration zones within the Borough that work with our eco-charter partners (as proposed in 4.16) and support our green vision for net zero.

## Economic Development and Regeneration - Actions and Priorities 2023/2024

Implementation of the 'New Economic Principles for Worthing' roadmap.

- The Council will work to implement the recently adopted 'New Economic Principles for Worthing' including:
  - Development of model of a circular economy with sustainable growth, drawing from approaches such as Doughnut Economics and the Cooperative Council movement
  - The engagement of Anchor institutions in economic development networking
  - Devolution of decisions and resources to community level (see also community sections)
  - Economic planning to include wellbeing outcomes, inequality reduction and climate emergency requirements
- To improve green inward investment the council will continue to actively work with local businesses, the Worthing BID and others to support start ups and encourage more networking and collaboration between businesses, communities, the council and Not For Profits.
- Develop a business support plan for 2023-25 with three key strands of sustainability, innovation and digital. As part of this work, Decoy Farm is able to make a significant contribution to our Net Zero economic ambitions.
- With partners the council will seek to better understand and respond to skills employment gaps and will seek to stimulate and encourage CreaTech (where creativity meets technology to

	create new ways of engaging audiences and to inspire business growth and investment).
Improve skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will interact with local schools and colleges to promote skills required by local businesses (including green jobs).</li> <li>• The Council will work with Eco-Charter partners to make sure that our offer with respect green skills is innovative and effective to support growth</li> </ul>
Develop a digital business hub.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue development of our digital Business Hub (Customer Relationship Management tool), providing joined up support for our local SMEs.</li> </ul>
Deliver Regenerative Development in the Borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will develop Worthing design codes and as part of this consider what a 'Worthing Garden City' might look like and identify how progress on this vision might be achieved.</li> <li>• The council will progress development of Teville Gate and Union Place, negotiating with developers for the fairest, greenest deal possible for our town.</li> <li>• Publish a green, community focused design for Montague Place and look to allocate funding and to build it out by the end of 2024</li> <li>• The council starting in 2023/24 will seek to improve the edge of town areas through public realm interventions, for example through CIL contributions. Areas to benefit from this approach are to be agreed and the following areas are being considered: Montague Street West, Brighton Rd, Chapel Road, Ham Road and Tarring Road.</li> <li>• As described above the Council will ensure the Decoy Farm development supports the growth of green businesses</li> </ul>

Promote and improve active travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will continue to promote and support active travel, encouraging residents to make journeys in physically active ways - like walking, wheeling (using a wheelchair or mobility aid) and cycling. We aim to make active travel the natural choice for short journeys.</li> <li>• The council will continue to explore options around the creation of a car-free town centre and seafront, with a new network of pedestrian and cycling routes providing safe and easy access. Major focus on this in 2023/24 - George V to Sea Lane Cycle lane design and focus on finding funds to get it built.</li> </ul>
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## 5 Organisational Design & Capacity

Much of what we want to achieve relies on our organisation being set up to deliver in the right way. In terms delivering Our Plan, we are focusing on the building of the following organisational capabilities with our Adur partners:

### 5.1 New modern organisational design

In response to Our Plan, the Council will redesign services over time to reflect the three principles identified in Our Plan making the Council. The means we will:

- Focus on **resilience** rather than just efficiency
- Make change and **adaptation** part of how we work all the time
- Create the context for **participation** so we always be doing things with and not to people

## **5.2 A shift to proactive**

Our proactive work is about more than just the data and we will work to redesign frontline services to respond to the evidence we are seeing of the benefits of working in a more proactive way. We are focused on hardwiring a more proactive approach into how we collect income and recover debt, ensuring that this is aligned to our new corporate debt policy, which is premised on being fair, consistent and sensitive to people's needs. We are also designing more capacity into our teams to enable us to become more proactive in our approach to citizens that need help and support early, to enable them to manage and become more resilient. Working alongside our community partners, we want to continue to develop proactive working within our neighbourhoods and places, building strong community capacity to ensure that communities have what they need to help each other during difficult times.

## **5.3 Working in place**

As part of the organisational redesign work we will develop our ability to work with our communities. It's also about making sure that our frontline teams are part of and central to how we work with communities. To enable this we will develop a shared 'map of place' so that all teams have a common geographical footprint for delivery and we will experiment with forming multidisciplinary teams which support each other's work in these places.

## **5.4 Working more effectively with our partners**

We will review our current partnerships and ensure that we are making the most of the strengths and opportunities that these bring. We will look where possible to combine efforts with partners in order to make a greater impact across our priorities.

## **5.5 Investing in digital**

We will continue to invest in digital technologies in order to improve our customer experience and increase our organisational resilience by improving process design and effectiveness. We will focus on where there is a need to increase staff capacity to work directly with citizens so that we can continue to develop our proactive work.

We will build on the investment in gigabit infrastructure by developing our work with respect to citizen wifi as well as implementing new tools that will support our ambition as a Council for the Community.

## **5.6 Developing our data led practice**

As part of the organisational redesign which is driven by Our Plan we will develop our internal planning and prioritisation capabilities and develop performance dashboards to support our delivery ambitions.

We will continue to develop our use of predictive analytics in our proactive work in order to increase our ability to reach people before they are in crisis.

## **5.7 A strategic review of our assets**

The Council will continue to review its assets, to make sure we are using them well and to the greatest benefit for our residents. Drawing on the new economic principles outlined above, this approach will increasingly see the Council, with its partners, use economic levers to create a more resilient and sustainable local economy, with more diverse businesses, creating more employment and well-paid jobs for local people.

We will take a structured review of all of our assets with a view to determining how best they can be utilised to support our local communities. This will involve being open and transparent about the land and buildings that we own; ensuring that our relationships with tenants are strong; and that we maintain safe and well managed assets. Where it makes sense to do so, we will dispose of land and buildings to achieve our wider objectives.

## 5.8 Developing our use of external funding

We will review our current use of external funding and consolidate it as well as reviewing opportunities to expand our work with appropriate partners and funders who share our vision and purpose. We are leveraging external resources wisely to deliver our ambitions, such as the use of the Shared Prosperity Fund to focus on key priorities including the costs of living crisis and Proactive.

<b>Capacity Building - Actions and Priorities 2023/2024</b>	
Improve data and information about our communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Council will further develop and improve our data collection and management systems across the Council to give a clearer picture of how our Council services are interacting with and serving the needs of our Communities. As part of this work the council will seek to continue investment in digital infrastructure</li></ul>
Digitalise core services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Council will further develop digital self-service while improving customer experience and supporting residents most in need. It will also invest in new digital services in planning and bereavement and further improve digital and data services in housing.</li><li>• The digitisation of the Revenue and Benefits service will be completed in 2023/204, freeing up valuable officer time and allowing skills to be used on our Proactive programme, identifying and helping those most in need of our help and support. Proactive work will become more and more important in our efforts to prevent homelessness and the integration of the low income family tracker (LIFT) and Telljo will allow us to make targeted interventions on relevant groups. In addition, the introduction of Citizen Hub will allow better and more effective cross communication between the housing needs and customer contact teams, ensuring that wherever a Citizen first makes contact with us, their needs and concerns are treated holistically with relevant information made available to all the relevant departments.</li><li>• The Council will continue to improve the integration of support for our residents (benefits, support, wellbeing services) and link this to work being considered linked to creating a broader holistic community hub approach.</li></ul>

Improve digital provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure free public space broadband is available in the town centre and on the seafront and improve digital access in community hubs across the Borough.</li> <li>• Improve the Council's own core digital infrastructure and invest in more robust cyber security.</li> </ul>
Asset review and improve green spaces and leisure facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will continue its Strategic Review of Assets to ensure they continue to be used efficiently and as effectively as possible.</li> <li>• Use information from the strategic asset review and audit of parks and pavilions to develop a multi year investment programme to improve sports and cultural facilities and increase participation.</li> <li>• As part of this work a strategic review of planned investment into parks and open spaces (e.g. play equipment, grounds, seating and biodiversity improvements, biodiversity monitoring) will be undertaken.</li> </ul>
Ensure procurement brings stronger benefits to the local community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council will continue to maximise the opportunities provided to us through our procurement approaches giving additional emphasis to better outcomes for residents, investments in local supply chains and enhanced local employment opportunities. In particular we will look at how to maximise opportunities provided by the new Procurement Act expected in 2024.</li> </ul>
Consider a climate bonds scheme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will explore the possibility of developing a local Climate Bonds scheme to raise money for local sustainable projects.</li> </ul>



## **6. Engagement and Communication**

Inclusive participation is central to the overall approach of the Council. Engagement with our communities and partners through the Big Listen Campaign, the opening of democracy and other engagement opportunities described in the report, are better informing and directing the plans of the Council.

Through our 'Council for the Community' principles and objectives the Council is actively seeking to make the connection between what we hear from the communities in Worthing and the decisions we make.

Delivery of specific projects will be communicated through the Council's communication channels, press releases, social media etc as appropriate but we will also use these channels to amplify community voices and to invite new ideas and contributions to the work of the Council.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 The cost of delivering most of these priorities are accommodated in the existing 2023/24 budget. Where this is not possible, funding will be sought from members, either with decisions around changing priorities or with the use of reserves, to support the delivery of individual initiatives.

## **8 Legal Implications**

- 8.1 Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2000 provides all local authorities with the power to take any steps which are likely to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their area and residents. It also places a duty on authorities to develop a community strategy, together with other local bodies, for this purpose, and is a strategy that also contributes to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK
- 8.2 s1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the Council to do anything an individual can do apart from that which is specifically prohibited by pre-existing legislation

- 8.3 Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 1999 (LGA 1999) contains a general duty on a best value authority to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness
- 8.4 Specific legal implications arising from any of the commitments referred to in this report, will be reported to Members, in each commitment specific report delivered as part of the usual decision making process.

### **Background Papers**

- [Strategic Priorities for Worthing Borough Council](#)
- [Our Plan for Adur and Worthing Council's](#)
- ['Becoming a Council for the community: principles and approach'.](#)
- [New Economic principles for Worthing](#)
- [The Principles Governing Climate Emergency Action for Worthing](#)
- [New Culture Principles for Worthing](#)

### **Officer Contact Details:-**

Richard Tuset, Policy Lead  
[richard.tuset@adur-worthing.gov.uk](mailto:richard.tuset@adur-worthing.gov.uk)

Catherine Howe, Chief Executive  
01903 221001  
[Catherine.Howe@adur-worthing.gov.uk](mailto:Catherine.Howe@adur-worthing.gov.uk)

## **Sustainability & Risk Assessment**

### **1. Economic**

This document describes the Council's new approach to economic activity which reflects the objectives and priorities of the Administration. As such it is intended to have an ongoing positive effect on the Borough's economic activity and an action plan to support this will be developed in 2023/24 to support this work.

### **2. Social**

**2.1 Social Value** - The work outlined in this report is expressly designed to increase social outcomes - building participatory infrastructure and capability in order to help our communities thrive. Key priorities set out in the report include being responsive to the needs of the community by opening up democracy and undertaking more engagement and participation work. In response to the cost of living crisis, for example, the Council has worked with residents, businesses and partners in the creation of an action plan to immediately start addressing needs. Actions include how the authority can help prevent households entering crisis as well as helping those who are already struggling. The action plan and its associated engagement processes are enabling the Council to better understand the scale of need, identify who most needs support and how best this support can be given.

**2.2 Equality Issues** - The Council is subject to the general Equality Duty set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The actions set out in this paper explain how the Council is meeting its legal duties by supporting further engagement with communities; helping to ensure services are designed and delivered in ways that better meet specific needs and address areas of historic and ongoing disadvantage and inequality. It is the clear intention of the Council to actively engage with groups that have traditionally found it difficult to be heard in decision making spaces. This has been done primarily via the Big Listen work but is being developed in all programmes of activity.

### **2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**

There are specific commitments in the report which relate to the promotion of communities as safe places. Delivery of these commitments by working in partnership through multidisciplinary teams is in progress and being strengthened.

## **2.4 Human Rights Issues**

The programme of work set out in the report enables the Council to identify solutions with other partners that will enable our residents, communities and neighbourhoods to flourish.

The activities undertaken specifically look at aspects of inequality in our communities, from having a voice in our democratic system to being able to feed your family and heat your house. This Council is clear that these issues must be addressed for all in our communities

## **3. Environmental**

Developing the Council's role in responding to the climate emergency and in protecting and developing the natural environment are key priorities for the Council and its ambitions. This report explains the approach being taken and progress made.

## **4. Governance**

The Council's key priorities include being more responsive to the needs of the community by opening up democracy and undertaking more engagement and participation work.